

OCTOBER 29, 1976

ELECTION '76: THE STATES TO WATCH
(EDITORS: THIS SCRIPT IS LONGER THAN USUAL, BUT SERVICES MAY
FIND IT USEFUL AS SOURCE MATERIAL AS WELL AS FOR
BROADCAST).

ANNCR:

ON NOVEMBER SECOND, VOTERS IN ALL FIFTY STATES AND THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WILL GO TO THE POLLS TO CHOOSE A PRESIDENT.
UNDER THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE SYSTEM, THE FINAL DECISION WILL BE
DETERMINED NOT BY THE TOTAL POPULAR VOTE BUT BY THE ELECTORAL
VOTE ALLOTTED EACH STATE ON THE BASIS OF POPULATION. CHARLES
MEDD REPORTS OF THE KEY STATES TO WATCH ON ELECTION DAY.

VOICE:

WITH THE AMERICAN CONTINENT DIVIDED INTO FOUR SEPARATE TIME
ZONES, VOTES ARE CAST AND COUNTED IN STAGES MOVING FROM EAST TO
WEST. THUS, ELECTION-WATCHERS FOLLOW THE SUN'S PATH, BEGINNING
ON THE EASTERN SEABOARD WHERE THEIR EYES FIRST FOCUS ON A
CLUSTER OF THREE IMPORTANT STATES -- NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY AND
PENNSYLVANIA -- WHICH HAVE A COMBINED TOTAL OF EIGHTY-FIVE
ELECTORAL VOTES, OR NEARLY ONE-THIRD OF THE TWO HUNDRED
SEVENTY NEEDED TO ELECT A PRESIDENT.

OF THE THREE, NEW YORK, WITH AN ELECTORAL COUNT OF FORTY-ONE,
IS THE LARGEST AND, POLITICALLY SPEAKING, THE MOST CRUCIAL. THE
STATE ITSELF DIVIDES INTO THREE DISTINCTIVE GEOGRAPHIC AND
POLITICAL AREAS: HEAVILY POPULATED NEW YORK CITY WITH ITS
TEEMING MIXTURE OF ETHNIC VOTERS -- JEWS, CATHOLICS, BLACKS AND
PUERTO RICANS -- WHO OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORT THE DEMOCRATS;
NEXT, THE FAST-GROWING SUBURBS, WHICH ARE PREDOMINANTLY WHITE,
PROTESTANT, MIDDLE CLASS AND REPUBLICAN; AND, FINALLY, NEW
YORK'S UPSTATE REGION WITH ITS HANDFUL OF SMALLER CITIES
SCATTERED ACROSS A BROAD SWEEP OF FARMLAND, LONG A REPUBLICAN

PRE-ELECTION POLLS SAY JIMMY CARTER SHOULD WIN NEW YORK, AS HAVE MOST DEMOCRATS IN THE RECENT PAST. TO DO SO, HE NEEDS OVERWHELMING MARGINS FROM NEW YORK CITY ETHNIC VOTERS, WHO WHILE NOT OVERLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE GEORGIA BAPTIST, STILL RECALL PRESIDENT FORD'S EARLY REFUSAL TO HELP THE FINANCIALLY-TRoubLED CITY. THE CARTER LEAD IS DROPPING, AND A LOSS HERE COULD BE FATAL TO HIS NATIONAL CHANCES.

SANDWICHED BETWEEN THE BIG STATES OF NEW YORK AND PENNSYLVANIA IS SMALL BUT DENSELY-POPULATED NEW JERSEY WITH SEVENTEEN ELECTORAL VOTES. ELECTIONS HERE, AS A RULE, ARE DETERMINED BY THE RELATIVE STRENGTHS OF STATE PARTY ORGANIZATIONS WHICH IN THE PAST HAVE BEEN DISTINGUISHED BY FACTIONALISM AND SOMETIMES MIRED IN SCANDAL. WHILE FEW AGREE ON THE REASONS FOR THESE PARTY SHORTCOMINGS, THEY HAVE HELPED MAKE NEW JERSEY A SO-CALLED "SWING STATE", ONE THAT IS SECURE FOR NEITHER PARTY AND IS THUS HARD TO PREDICT. NEW JERSEY DEMOCRATS, AFTER YEARS OF DECAY, HAVE REFORMED THEMSELVES AND NOW HOLD MOST KEY STATE-WIDE OFFICES, A FACT THAT POINTS TO, BUT DOES NOT GUARANTEE, A CARTER VICTORY.

PENNSYLVANIA, WHOSE TWENTY-SEVEN ELECTORAL VOTES MAKE IT THE NATION'S THIRD BIGGEST POLITICAL PRIZE, IS ANOTHER STATE WHERE CARTER IS A SLIGHT BUT UNCERTAIN FAVORITE. THE DEMOCRATS HERE BEGIN WITH THEIR PERENNIAL STRONGHOLD IN PHILADELPHIA WHICH, LIKE NEW YORK CITY, PROVIDES THEM WITH A CLEAR VOTER MAJORITY. THAT MAJORITY IS OFTEN CANCELLED OUT BY REPUBLICAN VOTES IN THE VAST CENTRAL PORTION OF THE STATE, A COLLECTION OF SMALL CITIES AND TOWNS, LEAVING THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE COAL AND STEEL-RICH WESTERN FRINGE. IN AND ABOUT THE METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH, WHERE THE LABOR VOTE IS CRITICAL,

REST THE DEMOCRATIC CHANCES. ONE OF EVERY FOUR PENNSYLVANIA VOTERS BELONGS TO A UNION, AND LABOR HAS ORGANIZED AN INTENSIVE GET-OUT-THE-VOTE DRIVE HERE. IT'S ONE REASON WHY CARTER SUPPORTERS EXPECT TO WIN, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE COMPLAINING ABOUT A SHORTAGE OF CAMPAIGN MONEY AND ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE SUPPORT OF CATHOLIC VOTERS WHO ARE UNHAPPY WITH THE CANDIDATE'S POSITION ON ABORTION.

BECAUSE THE EARLY AMERICAN SETTLERS SPENT THEIR FIRST TWO CENTURIES EAST OF THE ALLEGHENY MOUNTAINS, WHAT WAS ONCE CALLED THE WEST, AND IS NOW CALLED THE MIDWEST, BEGINS JUST BEYOND THAT RANGE IN OHIO. MANY EXPERTS BELIEVE THIS MAY BE THE MOST TELL-TALE STATE OF ALL, PARTICULARLY IN-SO-FAR AS GERALD FORD'S ELECTION PROSPECTS GO, FOR NO REPUBLICAN HAS BEEN ELECTED PRESIDENT WITHOUT TAKING OHIO'S TWENTY-FIVE ELECTORAL VOTES. DESPITE ITS REPUBLICAN REPUTATION, OHIO -- AN ALMOST PERFECT BLEND OF RURAL AND URBAN LIFE -- IS NEVER WHOLLY BEYOND DEMOCRATIC REACH. HERE AGAIN THE UNIONS ARE WELL MOBILIZED, AND OHIO FARMERS MANY OF THEM WITH DISTANT ROOTS IN THE SOUTH, ARE NOT UNSYMPATHETIC TO THE MAN FROM GEORGIA. CARTER SUPPORTERS LOOK FOR A NARROW WIN IN OHIO, A RESULT THAT WOULD NOT SURPRISE THE POLITICAL EXPERTS.

ELSEWHERE IN THE MIDWEST, THE STATES TO WATCH ARE MICHIGAN AND ILLINOIS. GERALD FORD, A MICHIGAN CONGRESSMAN FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, IS EXPECTED TO WIN THE TWENTY-ONE ELECTORAL VOTES OF HIS HOME STATE, AND A LOSS THERE, HIS AIDES ADMIT, WOULD SPELL DISASTER. CARTER'S CHANCES FOR AN UPSET DEPEND ON THE SIZE OF THE BLACK VOTE, POTENTIALLY HEAVY IN DETROIT, AND THE POLITICAL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNITED AUTOWORKERS, ON WHOM DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES HAVE LONG RELIED.

ILLINOIS, WITH TWENTY-SIX ELECTORAL VOTES, IS NORMALLY VIEWED AS TWO SEPARATE POLITICAL ZONES: THE BIG CITY OF CHICAGO WHERE MAJOR RICHARD DALEY'S VOTE-GETTING MACHINE REGULARLY PRODUCES OVERWHELMING DEMOCRATIC MAJORITIES, AND THE REST OF THE STATE, LARGELY RURAL AND REPUBLICAN. MOST EXPERTS BELIEVE THAT PRESIDENT FORD'S PROSPECTS HAVE BEEN HELPED BY A SIMULTANEOUS GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION WHICH AN IMMENSELY POPULAR REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE IS EXPECTED TO WIN BY A TWO-TO-ONE MARGIN. STILL, THESE SAME EXPERTS SAY THE PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST IN ILLINOIS REMAINS A TOSS-UP.

WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, WHERE TWO-THIRDS OF THE NATION'S LANDMASS IS FOUND, ONLY TWO STATES ARE SEEN AS CRUCIAL. RICH, SPRAWLING TEXAS, WHERE OILMEN NOW OUTNUMBER COWBOYS AND VOTERS OF BOTH PARTIES PREFER CONSERVATIVES, WAS EARLIER SEEN AS SAFE FOR JIMMY CARTER. AS IN MOST OF THE SOUTH, THE DEMOCRATS HAVE LONG ENJOYED A MONOPOLY IN TEXAS, PROVIDED THEIR CANDIDATES ARE NOT PERCEIVED AS OVERLY LIBERAL. WHILE CARTER'S SOUTHERN-STYLE LIBERALISM SEEMS ACCEPTABLE HERE, HIS RECENT INTERVIEW IN PLAYBOY MAGAZINE OFFENDED MANY, INCLUDING PROTESTANT CHURCHGOERS WHO WERE SHOCKED BY HIS REMARKS ABOUT SEX AND STILL OTHERS BY HIS CRITICISM OF THAT REVERED TEXAN, FORMER PRESIDENT, LYNDON JOHNSON. BUT STRONG SUPPORT FROM BLACKS AND MEXICAN-AMERICANS -- WHO MAKE UP THIRTY PERCENT OF THE STATE'S TOTAL POPULATION -- IS EXPECTED TO GIVE CARTER THE TWENTY-SIX ELECTORAL VOTES THAT BELONG TO TEXAS.

THE LAST IMPORTANT STATE IS THE BIGGEST POLITICAL PRIZE OF ALL -- CALIFORNIA WHOSE TWENTY MILLION RESIDENTS TRANSLATE INTO FORTY-FIVE ELECTORAL VOTES. WHILE DEMOCRATS FAR OUTNUMBER

REPUBLICANS, CALIFORNIANS -- ON ELECTION DAY OR ANY OTHER DAY -- SELDOM DO THE PREDICTABLE. AND IF THEY HAD THEIR WAY THIS YEAR, CALIFORNIA VOTERS WOULD PREFER TO BE CHOOSING BETWEEN THE STATE'S TWO MOST POPULAR POLITICIANS: FORMER GOVERNOR RONALD REAGAN, THE CONSERVATIVE WHO ALMOST WON THE REPUBLICAN NOMINATION, AND THE MAN WHO SUCCEEDED HIM AS GOVERNOR, JERRY BROWN, WHOSE LAST-MINUTE CHALLENGE MOMENTARILY THREATENED THE CARTER NOMINATION.

MISTER FORD NOR CARTER IS WELL-KNOWN IN CALIFORNIA, NOR HAS EITHER GENERATED MUCH IN THE WAY OF VISIBLE BACKING. OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE OUTCOME RESTS ON TWO FACTORS: THE RATIO OF REAGAN AND BROWN SUPPORTERS WHO BOTHER TO VOTE AND WHETHER CARTER'S ENDORSEMENT OF A NEW FARM LABOR LAW ACTIVATES MORE WORKERS WHO SUPPORT THE LAW OR MORE FARM-OWNERS WHO OPPOSE IT. ON ELECTION-EVE, CALIFORNIA, LIKE SO MUCH OF THE NATION, REMAINS UNPREDICTABLE.

WHILE THESE ARE THE IMPORTANT STATES TO WATCH, THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO GAUGE THE RESULTS, ELECTIONS-ANALYST RICHARD SCAMMON, FOR EXAMPLE, SUGGESTS A CLOSE LOOK AT FOUR STATES TIGHTLY CLUSTERED AND NEAR THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION CENTER -- OHIO, INDIANA, ILLINOIS AND KENTUCKY. OHIO AND ILLINOIS, AS REPORTED EARLIER, ARE RATED VIRTUALLY EVEN FOR BOTH CANDIDATES. INDIANA, NORMALLY A MIDWESTERN REPUBLICAN STRONGHOLD, LEANS TOWARD FORD, AND KENTUCKY, A BORDER STATE WITH SOUTHERN SYMPATHIES, LEANS TOWARD CARTER. SHOULD EITHER CANDIDATE CAPTURE THREE OR MORE OF THESE STATES, HE IS MORE THAN LIKELY, SAYS SCAMMON, TO WIN THE ELECTION. AND SINCE THE VOTES IN ALL FOUR STATES ARE COUNTED AT ROUGHLY THE SAME TIME ON ELECTION NIGHT, AND AT A COMPARATIVELY EARLY STAGE, THE TREND, IF THERE IS ONE, WILL PROVIDE A TIMELY CLUE.

THOSE SEEKING LESS COMPLICATED CLUES MIGHT SIMPLY LOOK FOR THE RESULTS IN TWO STATES -- TINY DELAWARE IN THE EAST WHICH HAS SUPPORTED EVERY PRESIDENTIAL WINNER SINCE NINETEEN FIFTY-TWO, OR NEW MEXICO IN THE SOUTHWEST WHICH HAS BACKED THE WINNER IN EVERY ELECTION SINCE NINETEEN TWELVE. BUT TAKEN TOGETHER THE TWO STATES ARE NOT MUCH HELP THIS YEAR. FOR THE POLLS SAY DELAWARE WILL SUPPORT PRESIDENT FORD WHILE NEW MEXICO IS EXPECTED TO GO FOR JIMMY CARTER.

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NES/GH/PBM/CAK